

**State Superintendent's Advisory Council
on 4-Year-Old Kindergarten and Community Approaches
“Forces for Four-Year-Olds”**

Recommendations for Continuous Promotion of High-Quality
4-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) and 4-Year-Old Kindergarten and Community Approaches (4KCA) in Wisconsin
(Spring 2016-Links updated Fall 2018)

**INCREASE INVESTMENT TO PROVIDE QUALITY, VOLUNTARY EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN**

- **Continue to provide incentives for districts to implement community approaches.** Start-up grants have provided incentives for new districts to implement community approaches. Communities that operate school-based-only 4K have few incentives to implement community approaches. Once a district is implementing 4K with community-approach models, it needs additional support to keep the approach operational. There are additional costs from the traditional school-based model, including the need for more administrative support and oversight with community sites, costs to maintain coordination councils, and costs for ensuring the community sites have communication and system structures to meet the 4K requirements. Incentives should include for following:
 - **Limited additional funds:** As more districts have 4KCA models, the need for start-up grants is reduced. This grant program should be reframed to support districts in the ongoing implementation of community approach models. This would provide **small amounts of additional funds** to each district to support the model.
 - **State and regional networking supports:** Continue to support districts using community approach and encourage new districts by providing **networking opportunities** at the regional and state level such as the October Regional Networking meeting and the annual 4K Leadership Forum (Preserving Early Childhood).
- **Collect more data and share information on 4K and 4KCA in Wisconsin**
Continue efforts to include 4K and 4KCA in the internal DPI data system and build the early childhood longitudinal data system to provide the data needed to answer the multitude of research and impact questions related to early childhood. Provided analysis and information to stakeholders at the state, regional, and local levels.
- **Promote the importance of community collaboration councils.**
A key to sustaining community approaches is the use of a community council. Councils have been built into the start-up grant process. There is a need to support communities who are at initial stages of council development, as well as for ongoing support for communities as the context of programs and services change over time. Continue to promote and support the creation of community councils for sustainability, to support the larger early childhood agenda and as a mechanism for continued shared leadership and family engagement.

CONNECT EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- **The Superintendent’s Advisory Committee and System Alignment.** The creation of the Governor’s Council on Early Childhood (2010) is seen as an important historical step in building the early childhood infrastructure. The Superintendent’s Advisory Committee should maintain its function within the ECAC in relationship to 4K and 4K Community Approaches; in this capacity, it is uniquely poised to share input related to early childhood and broad relationships among 4K within schools and 4K within community

approaches. A dynamic school would be a leader in making connections with the early childhood and other stakeholders in their community.

- **Promote the development of a comprehensive system of screening and assessment beginning at birth and aligning with the structures beginning at the third grade.** The importance of a comprehensive approach to screening and assessment has been identified in the *Healthy Children Blueprint* and in the Response to Intervention early childhood alignment work. Build on these efforts to support the development of aligned approaches at the state, regional and local levels.

ACCELERATE IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

- **Establish key standards for practice for 4K and community approaches.** The *Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS)*, established in 2003 with support from three Wisconsin state departments provides voluntary guidance on program standards relative to birth to the start of first grade. State specific 4K and 4KCA standards for practice aligned with national guidance are needed to ensure developmentally appropriate practice within and across programs for children who are four years old. This would also contribute to smooth transitions between programs and across grade levels, promoting appropriate support of staff, relevant information to families, and developmentally appropriate expectations for young children.
- **Promote quality program evaluation practices.** We need good information on 4K, community approaches, and program quality. Many districts use the ECERS or CLASS for program evaluation. Educator effectiveness has provided opportunities to explore program evaluation using the Danielson framework which is closely aligned to CLASS. The 4KCA impact project identified fifty-four impacts for 4KCA, which are available at <https://dpi.wi.gov/early-childhood/kind/4k/4kca>, a webpage created to showcase the benefits of 4KCA to children, families, education programs, school districts, and the general public.

BUILD A HIGH-PERFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

- **Support and promote cross-sector professional development at the state, regional, and local levels.** Significant progress has been made in promoting cross-system and community-wide professional development to identify, reinforce, and sustain common expectations and skill development of the workforce. Continue to support cross-system professional development for early learning standards (WMELS), social emotional development (WI Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence), and additional sources of evidence-based early childhood content.

ENGAGE FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IN EARLY LEARNING

- **Promote effective family engagement.** Parent Outreach funding support is part of the district 4K program if a district offers 87.5 hours of outreach activities to each family in a program. Continue to develop and promote tools for districts to engage families, such as
 - Engaging Families around WI Model Early Learning Standards:
<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels/engaging-families/>
 - The Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence parent training component:
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/trainers.html>

These recommendations have been developed by stakeholder involvement during 2015-16 and echo the commitment of Chief State School Officers' *Equity Starts Early: How Chiefs Will Build High-Quality Early Education* (March, 2016): <https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/EquityStartsEarly3242016.pdf>